Recovery of priceless antiques by CBI

4029. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of priceless antiques and other articles, seized by the CBI during raids on illegal artifact dealers and smugglers, are lying in CBI godowns in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these articles are handed over to ASI only after cases are disposed of and by then they undergo unrepairable damage due to lack of care; and

(d) if so, the measures taken by CBI for proper maintenance and preservation of these articles?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir. A large number of antiquities and art treasures have been seized by the Central Bureau of Investigation in various searches conducted relating to Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972. These antiquities are not kept in godown but in a property maintained malkhana of Central Bureau of Investigation's specialized Antiquity Unit located at Central Bureau of Investigation Headquarters, New Delhi.

(b) These antiquities and art objects pertain to various cases registered by Central Bureau of Investigation during the past several years.

(c) and (d) The seized articles can be handed over to Archaeological Survey of India or National Museum, New Delhi only after the final decision of the court. It is the requirement of law that the seized objects should be maintained in a condition in which they have been seized. All the objects therefore are kept in proper condition.

Classical languages

4030. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the Indian languages that are notified as the classical languages and the benefits that may accrue on such notified classical languages;